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HANDLING INDICATOR

TO : Department of State

INFO: CARACAS, CANBERRA

FROM: Amembassy MEXICO

EO 11652: N/A

DATE: 31 July 1974

TAGS: PFOR, MX, AS

SUBJECT: Visit of Foreign Minister Willesee to Mexico

REF : Canberra 3777

Australian Foreign Minister Donald Willesee's visit to Mexico June 15 to 18 was principally a good will mission arranged in conjunction with his travel to Caracas to head the Australian delegation at the LOS Conference there. Although the visit was brief and arranged on short notice due to the Australian elections, Willesee was able to meet with President Echeverria, Foreign Minister Rabasa and other prominent Mexican leaders. According to press reports, which were reasonably extensive and favorable, these meetings focused on LOS matters and recent nuclear tests. Willesee told the press that Australia recognizes a territorial sea of 12 miles and a patrimonial sea of 188 miles. He reportedly added that the nation possessing the waters also has a right to exploit the fish resources in them. However, if a nation was not able to exploit these resources, he took the position these cannot be left unutilized but did not explain what mechanism would assure this.

In discussing nuclear tests with the press, Willesee noted that Australia was not only concerned about those conducted by France in the Pacific but also about those conducted by China and India as well. He opposed the idea of breaking diplomatic relations with those powers which continue testing because this would probably not bring about the end of such tests but would only curtail the use of diplomatic pressure for this end.

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An Australian Embassy officer, noting that Prime Minister Whitlam and Foreign Minister Willesee have both visited Mexico within the past year, said that the Foreign Minister reiterated the GOA's standing invitation to President Echeverría and Foreign Minister Rabasa to visit Australia. Comment: Embassy doubts that a visit by either GOM leader will occur either this year or early next year. President Echeverría has already visited both the Peoples Republic of China and Japan. The balance of East Asia and the Pacific region does not appear to be suitable for the type of tour Echeverría favors -- a triumphant procession from capital to capital, with crowds turned out and press headlines. Moreover, there are politically more fertile and as yet untapped fields to be visited closer to home, in Central America and the Caribbean (notably Cuba). However, a visit to Australia cannot be ruled out at a later date. End Comment.

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